2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

of the shortage of women. This, I believe, is largely caused by the high rate of mortality in childbirth and the extremely hard lives of the women.

A girl, once betrothed, is the property of the family which has bought her, and must be *intacta virgo* when handed over. The most important object of marriage is to obtain sons. A sonless man had no one to avenge him, and his soul would never rest. Therefore in old days, when a girl was handed over, it was usual that the couple should cohabit, but no marriage ceremony should take place till a son was born. The Church has actively fought this custom and almost abolished it. But some cases still occur. Even when the unfortunate woman bore several daughters she might still be treated as worthless; and a married woman who has borne only daughters and is left as a widow has not the right to stay in the family house, but may be permitted to do so. If this is not allowed, her own nearest male relative has the right to sell her again—cheap. I heard of a nephew who had sold his aunt twice.

In a report on the missionary work in Albania made by the Franciscan father Donato Maria di Trento in 1740, he states that the priests are doing all they can to prevent parents from allowing the betrothed to cohabit before marriage, which custom, he says, is universal, and describes as "a most foul torrent of universal concubinage." "They will not contract marriage till offspring is obtained."

Girls being thus married without any choice of their own, and being miserable in strange surroundings, were naturally apt to run away. In the above report this is constantly mentioned as cause of great trouble and feud. Thus Padre Candido reports from Gruda, January 31, 1740: "Women are running away every day, even after marriage." And P. Bonaventura says: "The women are running away *a grandissima furia*."

The custom of child betrothal and payment of parents is described and signed by thirteen padres and the Bishop of Scutari in 1731, and it is stated that it is great disgrace for the betrothed to see each other before they cohabit, or for the bride even to speak with the relatives of the bridegroom. The two parties are never consulted, and "in this country the youth never make love."

To counteract these difficulties the Mission makes much use of the local custom of swearing a common oath in which those swearing it call down all kinds of imprecations on their heads should they be forsworn. Consequent upon the swearing of many such oaths the Mission reports sixty-four marriages celebrated either before or immediately after cohabitation. P. Bonaventura triumphantly states that thirteen married by him are still with their husbands; but of those

Birth, Marriage, and Death

Among the Dukagini I met several virgins, but all wore women's dress. As a rule, in all districts, the sworn virgin became servant to one of the priests, and often joined the Third Order of St. Francis. Some became nuns or worked in one of the Scutari nunneries.

In the Maltsia e Madhe, in the case of a man with several daughters and no son, by his wish one could swear virginity and act as his son. He could bequeath to her his house and land for her lifetime, after which it reverted to the nearest male heir. Such a virgin had the right to sell her younger sisters. Such an one, aged about forty, I met in the Hoti tribe (Plate VIII).

In the Dukagini tribes, where the virgins do not wear men's dress, they cannot inherit and live on and work the land during their lifetime as in Maltsia e Madhe. The land goes to the next male heir, and he must pay the virgin yearly 300 okos of maize, 18 of rakija, and 30 of wine, and she can enforce payment by appeal to the Council of Elders.

One case only did I hear of a virgin breaking her vow. She had been for years servant to the priest of Baitza, and was accounted holy. On his death she was forty, and shocked the country-side by eloping with a Gusinje Moslem. No one dared follow to take vengeance in such a dangerous district, but it was piously hoped that she would pay the price of her crime in hell.

On the way from Berisha to Apripa we passed a huge rock. A virgin so holy that she was almost a saint, had vowed to carry it to the church at Berisha. She carried it safely a long way. Then in the forest she heard a shepherd fluting, and looked at him and admired him. Straightway she forgot the heavenly things on which she had fixed her mind; she dropped the rock, and when she tried to pick it up again found she had lost her miraculous strength. And there the rock stands.

In spite of many inquiries, I failed to hear of a case of a young man refusing to marry his betrothed bride. People were surprised I should ask and always replied: "But why should he? God has made all women alike." On the other hand, I met some cases of blind fury ending in blood-feud where a father had broken faith and sold his betrothed daughter to someone else. I argued with one man who was "in blood" that it was stupid to want to marry a girl he had never seen and who did not want him—people in other lands would laugh at him. He furiously replied that the girl had been paid for years ago by his father; the return of the bride-price made no difference; she was their property, and he would get her if he had to shoot her husband to do so. His honour and that of his whole house had been blackened. If people in other lands laughed at him it only showed they had no honour.

I asked often why the young men did not choose for themselves,

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and ask the girl. The usual answer was that they were too modest. The suggestion seemed to be thought indecent.

The fact that both in Montenegro and Albania a word of Turkish origin is used commonly for "to make love" (Montenegrin and Bosnian, "ashikovati"; Albanian, "ashik," lover—"ashari," love) suggests that love-making played little or no part in the marriages of both lands. I heard that the son of an Austrian mother and an Albanian father was betrothed and asked his mother if he was much in love. "O dear, no!" she cried. "Not in the least; he is quite Albanian!"

One case only I met in which—perhaps for the first time—a betrothal was broken and the girl left free to marry. She was the niece of Mgr. Premi Dochi, mitred abbot of the Mirdites, a very remarkable man, whose death during the war was an immense loss to Albania.

I passed the night at her father's house. The girl sat sullen and glowering in a corner like a wild cat at bay. No one spoke to her. I asked what was the matter. She had refused to be sent to her betrothed. Her father was furious. Only the abbot's intervention had saved her. He talked the young man into admitting that it was useless to marry a girl who hated him and would probably run away, when another more amenable could be found, and got him to swear that no blood-vengeance should be taken if the girl married another. But the father, enraged, declared often and loudly, "A girl marries to please her house and not for herself"; and rated her till I was sorry I had asked. Awe of the abbot alone had made him yield.

Marriage Ceremonies.—When the wedding-day is fixed the male relatives of the bridegroom go to fetch the bride. The bridegroom usually does not go. As the tribes are exogamous the distance may be considerable. Sometimes the men of the bride's family take her to a spot half-way and hand her over there. Sometimes she is fetched from her father's house. Moslem girls are always accompanied by one or two female relatives. Christian girls usually are, if the journey is a long one; but not always. In no case does the mother go.

Marriage among the Christians is according to the rites of the Catholic Church.

I was never at a mountain wedding, but was told some local ceremonies. In Klementi the bride, on coming to her husband's home, must throw an apple over the roof, and is given some corn. This recalls the confarreatio of the Romans. She is then led three times round the hearth. All through the mountains I gathered that a bride must enter the house with her right foot first and carry in a male child with her. On marriage the hair of the woman is dyed black and dressed differently from that of a virgin. There are various modes, according to district. In the Maltsia e Madhe the head is shaved in front and over the temples,

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583 work to do again. No one thought it unreasonable, and the wedding was postponed till she had finished. I created great horror by saying it would be better to find another man to fit the already made garments.

All the gifts exchanged are keenly scrutinized, and the respective families argue as to whether they have been properly treated.

582 *Forbidden Degrees.*—Among the Catholics, of course, the usual laws have to be observed. But the people maintain far more rigid ones of their own. As we have shown in the chapter on tribes, no couple tracing origin from the same male ancestor, no matter how remote, is marriageable in North Albania, whether they be Christian or Moslem. Neither are those related by "hair-cutting" or by "sworn brotherhood" marriageable.

Priests cannot refuse to marry such if there be no other impediment, but I was assured it was very rarely they were asked to do so. Though I made many inquiries, I heard of but one case of a priest being asked to marry a couple with a remote common ancestor. Being an Albanian 684 tribesman, he thought it very repulsive, but as the pair had cohabited, he 183 consented; nor by Church law could he have refused. The bridegroom was shot soon afterwards by the outraged relatives.

3. The Levirate

587 On one point the tribesman came into severe collision with the 688 Church. He considered it his bounden duty to marry the widow, not only of his brother, but of any male of the house, except his father. In Maltsia e Madhe this custom had died out, and blood-feud arose [628] between Hoti and Kastrati because a case had occurred, and the Hoti considered their honour blackened. But among the Catholic Dukagini the custom, in spite of most strenuous efforts of the Church, was still common. Among the Moslem tribes and among the Moslems of Scutari I was assured it was almost universal.

[577] From the tribesman's point of view the position was this: A widow left with young children must remain in the family house and rear them. If they are daughters, she can be returned to her own people when they are old enough not to need her. If there is a son, she has the right to live in the house permanently, but she cannot marry outside the house, as no strange man can be brought into it. It would be cruel to condemn a young woman to celibacy; it would not be honourable. Therefore, even though her brothers-in-law were already married by the rites of the Church, one or other of them must take her as wife. The priest in vain called it concubinage. The man said she was his legal wife and his legal wife agreed with the arrangement.

Birth, Marriage, and Death

Sometimes the brother-in-law was unmarried, but this did not help matters, such marriages being prohibited by the Church. To stop the practice it was usual to excommunicate not only the couple but the whole "house" which permitted it, until the "levirate wife" was dismissed. I visited, at Apripa Gurit, a house of eighteen people thus under the ban. The son, a fine young fellow, had taken his elder brother's young widow to wife one month after her husband's death: this by tribe rule is the correct time. She had been married a very short time to her first husband and had not yet borne a child. The whole household was very uneasy about the excommunication, and offered the priest in my presence first thirty and then fifty guldens and pictures and candles for the church. But they stubbornly refused to put a stop to the "levirate marriage"; it would not be honourable. The young man himself was very certain of this. It was a duty he owed to his brother, and, no matter what the consequences, he would do it. He said they had found a girl, and arranged that he should marry her in a year's time. Till then he must cohabit with his sister-in-law. This he assured me very earnestly.

At Thethi Shala I found a case of a man who had thus taken his uncle's widow and his brother's widow. He then proposed taking a legitimate wife as well and had paid most of the purchase money. Only then did the bride's parents learn of the two other "wives." They said he should not have their daughter till the other two were dismissed. He replied she was paid for, and was his property and threatened vengeance.

The parents appealed to the padre, who sheltered them and the girl at the church-house, and succeeded in arranging a marriage for her with a man at a safe distance. The parents returned the first purchase money. "The aunt and sister-in-law" arrangement continued. The padre at Thethi had routed out all polygamous arrangements in his parish but two.

He said that the people had a deep-rooted belief that it was right thus to take as wife the widow of uncle, cousin, or brother if she continued to live in the communal house. If this was not permitted she must be sent home to her people. They could see no alternative, and pleaded: "It is our old custom. Do not interfere with it."

In the wild and distant tribes of Nikaj, Toplana, and Berisha the custom was extremely common among the Christians. Thus at Nikaj, out of three hundred houses about fifty had sister-in-law concubinage, and other houses similarly kept aunts, so a large proportion of the children were illegitimate in the eyes of the Church, but not of the people. The legitimate wives were very apt to bolt with another man, and there was much blood-feud. In Berisha I was told that the sister-in-

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law was taken to wife more often than not. To remonstrances the reply was, "She belongs to us," and it was pointed out it was the only way to get a wife without paying for her.

In these districts, if the widow is sold, the bride-price is shared by her husband's family and her father's.

A man at Nikaj came to see me who was excommunicate for having two wives—a legitimate wife and the widow of his cousin. He told me he could not possibly put her away because it would be a disgrace to do so. She must stay in the house because she had young children to bring up, and so long as she is in the house he must cohabit with her, for she cannot have another husband. He was unhappy about the excommunication—but one must do one's duty and take the risk.

It is perhaps noteworthy that in the districts where this custom is firmly rooted there are no Slavonic place-names and no appearance of any Slavonic blood. The people are all in stature shorter and smaller built than the Maltsia e Madhe people. They are almost all dark-eyed—dark-brown to hazel—and dark-haired. The skull is short, but is round at the back and has not the characteristic flat back of the folk farther north. The hair grows very low on the forehead, especially on the temples, where sometimes it almost unites by a thin line of hair with the outer end of the eyebrow. The eyebrows often nearly meet in the middle. The nose is short and straight. The moustache is sparse and straggly. The beard, such as is seen after a fortnight without shaving, often sparse or patchy.

The custom of the levirate may therefore belong to the small, dark, pre-Slavonic people.

The purpose of the levirate in other lands is often said to be to raise up children who are to rank as those of the deceased. Though this may have been the reason in the above-mentioned case of the man who took the very recently married widow of his brother, in the great majority of cases in Albania it is not so; for the widow with sons is the one who has the right to remain, and in fact must remain, in the family house; and therefore it is she who is most frequently the levirate wife. In this matter Albanian custom seems to differ from that in other lands where the levirate is practised.

4. Rights of Husband over Wife

No one may beat a woman but her father or her husband. In the mountains a husband had the right to beat his wife if he told her three times to do, or not to do, a thing, and she disobeyed each time. If he orders her not to reply and she does so he may beat her. Even some

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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big courtyard gates, and having no windows to the street on the ground floor. Like all Oriental houses, they are only of two stories; the upper, which contains the living rooms of the family, being reached by an outside wooden staircase under cover of the broad pent of the roof projecting over the landing or gallery on which all the rooms open.

In more remote towns, such as Prisrend or Skodra, the streets look dreary and deserted in the extreme, besides being extremely narrow and ill-paved, if paved at all, and the bazaars and shops are exceedingly mean and poor. The furniture consists chiefly of a low divan with very hard cushions, a few chairs and a mirror, and the lime-washed walls are sometimes decorated with a dado representing a landscape, executed in the crudest possible style chiefly in one colour. A shelf often runs round the walls to hold the copper *ibriks* and other utensils, and above it are hung the rich assortment of arms which is the pride of every family.

In the mountain districts the houses of the beys are complete fortresses, being surrounded by high walls pierced with loopholes for musketry. Only in times of open hostility, however, is it necessary to take any precautions against possible foes, for an Albanian's notion of honour does not allow him to slay a man in his own house, deadly as may be his feud with him. The villages of these districts are generally remote from each other, perched in high and inaccessible situations. The furniture of the cottages is limited to a few mats and rugs, a *sofra*, the low stand on which meals are served in Turkish

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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ambuscade by the men of Gardiki and Tchormovo, together with Ali and her only daughter, Shainitza. After having been subjected to every indignity and outrage by their captors, Khamko and her children had the good fortune to be ransomed by the generosity of a Greek merchant for the sum of 22,800 piastres (£3700).

Hatred of those who had thus humiliated her took entire possession of the Aghadina's soul, and her one idea thenceforward was to train up her son as the avenger of her wrongs. With this object she commenced to instil into his mind those pernicious principles which he was only too well disposed to receive, and which may be summed up in the words *Might is right*, an adage sufficiently popular among the turbulent Albanian clans. Ali's first attempt to vindicate his rights in the field was a complete failure. Having met with a more vigorous resistance than he expected, he fled from the fight, and was one of the first to re-enter Tepeleni. Khamko, furious at finding all her hopes blasted by what she deemed his cowardice, loaded him with reproaches, and thrusting her distaff into his hand, added, "Go, coward, and spin with the women in the harem; thou art fitter for that than for the career of arms!" Ali's fortunes indeed fluctuated for some time between success and failure. While he was absent on a campaign, Khamko found herself on her death-bed, and, though repeated and urgent messages were despatched to him, she died before he could arrive. The Aghadina in her will bequeathed to her son and daughter the task of immolating to her *manes* the inhabitants of Gardiki and Tchormovo, at whose hands they had suffered such

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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628 562 578 worthy of a better cause, and fourteen victims fell, thus perpetuating the feud among the survivors.

On another occasion the breaking of a girl's pitcher at the fountain by two mischievous boys resulted in such a desperate contest between her friends and theirs that some sixty persons fell in the fight. It is said, however, that even on such occasions as these 562 577 484 the men refrain, as far as possible, from striking or wounding the women, for the Albanian code of honour makes it impossible to attack a woman, whether armed or unarmed. The sacredness attached to their persons extends also to those whom they take under their protection. Escorted by a girl only, travellers may safely pass through the wildest parts of the country, and a man may cross, without fear, the lands of one with whom he is at feud, if he have the safe-conduct of a woman belonging to his enemy's family.

577 562 522 To such an extent is respect for women carried by the Albanians, that it is contrary to their notions of propriety ever to make women the subject of jokes or humorous stories. Insult or annoyance offered to a 578 562 girl, or carrying off one without the consent of her parents, almost invariably results in bitter feuds between families, or fierce battles between tribes. As with most mountain people, the moral code is with 684 the Skipetars exceedingly strict. Among many of the tribes any lapse from virtue on the part of a woman is punished with death, a subsequent marriage not being allowed to condone the fault. The penalty of adultery is of equally Draconic severity. The unfaithful wife is placed up to her shoulders in a pit, and

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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retired to the pasturage of Beston, which the shepherd gave to his daughter, taking with them the sheep which constituted Clement's wages. Here they settled down and prospered, leaving behind them great wealth in flocks, and a numerous family of descendants. At the present day the tribe of the Clementi number 500 families, or 5400 souls.

Social morality is pushed to its extremest limit by the Miridite mountaineers. Though their women enjoy the greatest freedom, an unmarried girl cannot, out of doors, speak to a man not a relative of her family without risking the loss of her reputation, a calamity which few would care to survive. M. Hecquard cites a case in point, related to him by an Albanian *abbé*, which well illustrates the value that an Albanian girl sets on her honour. A man happened to remark in joke to a girl, the sister of one of his friends, and before several other persons, that he had seen her in conversation with a young man, whose name he mentioned. On the following Easter Sunday, when all the tribe were congregated, the girl, who was under fifteen, on leaving the church after partaking, as is customary on that day, of the Eucharist, called God to witness to her innocence, and seizing a pistol from one of her relatives, shot herself through the heart. Two days afterwards, the man whose careless words had been the cause of the tragedy fell by the hand of the victim's brother.

Among the Albanians exogamy is the general rule, which is carried out by the Miridite chieftains to the extent of carrying off by force a woman from one of the neighbouring Moslem tribes. The wives of the

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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585 an altar is specially prepared. The nearest relatives of the bridegroom only are present, and he, like the bride, simulates great unwillingness to enter the apartment. The mass performed, the priest asks the bride three times if she accepts the man kneeling at her side for her husband. Custom, however, forbids her to reply, and at the third interrogation the women in attendance force her to bow her head in token of assent. The bridegroom, on the contrary, pronounces his consent in a loud voice. However plain the bride may prove to be, custom forbids that any sign of disgust or annoyance should be manifested. If, however, she be afflicted with any physical deformity, such as lameness, blindness, or a humped back, the husband may claim an indemnity from her parents, or, if he is prepared to abide the consequences of such an insult, may send her back to them.

The ceremony terminated, the bridegroom leaves the room, and the female guests re-enter, extolling in song the graces and virtues with which, according to them, every bride is endowed. The feast is then served, the men sitting down by themselves in one room, and the women in another, and the two parties amuse themselves separately for the rest of the evening. An hour before midnight, the women conduct the bride to the nuptial chamber, and, having taken off her bridal finery, cover her face with a veil, and leave her. When the bridegroom enters, he simulates astonishment at finding a maiden there. Lifting the veil from her head, he declares himself to be enraptured with her beauty, and asks her a hundred questions. The bride feigns sleep and pretends not to

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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Skiperi would Our Lady of Scutari forgive her children, and return to her ancient shrine.

The scene on this day in the great square building, which, with its bare walls and absence of ornament, bears little resemblance to a Romish church, is most striking and strange. The mass performed on the occasion is listened to by a congregation whose waists are perfect arsenals, bristling with pistols and yataghans of every shape and pattern. There are wild-looking, fierce-moustachioed highlanders, white-kilted Mussulmans, chieftains blazing with gold embroidery, and milder citizens in more homely garb, all assembled in honour of the Madonna, before whose shrine their ancestors had worshipped. Yet, notwithstanding their participation in the religious rites of their neighbours, the Albanians are not less tenacious of their own honour than of that of the creed they profess, any insult offered to a Christian church being promptly retaliated upon a Moslem mosque, and *vice versâ*. Of this the following incident, which occurred about the middle of the century, offers a striking illustration.

A certain Tahir Mala, of Bugna, belonging to the Moslem tribe of the Gascii, having married his son to a maiden of the Christian Schialla, set out to bring the bride home, accompanied, according to national custom, by a numerous train, and preceded by the tribal banners. On the return journey, they stopped, as usual, every now and then to fire volleys into the air. Their way, however, lying past a Christian cemetery, the cross, standing in the midst, offered a mark for their pistols too tempting to be resisted, and was soon

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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through which the animal is led. If the cow steps over the object with the right hoof, it is considered a good augury; if with the left, the omen is unfavourable. If a hen shakes her feathers in the house, or if one of her feathers hangs askew without falling, it foretells the arrival of a friend, or the receipt of news from an absent relative. Should the hen crow like a cock without turning its head to the East, it signifies a death or other serious misfortune. If, during the night, a cock crows at an unusual hour, it is either a sign of a change in the weather, or that important news will arrive in the morning. To an expectant mother, however, it announces that her child will be a boy. Should the dog howl while looking away from the dwelling, it is a sign of death; and if the cat mews repeatedly, that a member of the family will shortly fall ill. If, however, she licks herself frequently, it is merely a sign of rain.

Cats, I may here remark, are treated with great kindness by the Albanians, who, it is said, are not in the habit of laying to their charge the smashing of crockery, or the disappearance of provisions. According to a myth current among the Albanian highlanders, the cat was created by Jesus, who produced one from the sleeve of His mantle when dining in a house infested with mice. To kill a cat is consequently considered a most reprehensible action. When such a family pet dies, the children of the house call in their friends to assist in pussy's obsequies, and, after she has been carried in solemn procession to the grave, the little party sit down to a funeral feast, for which the mother willingly furnishes the necessary viands.

PEAKS OF SHALA

He had put on his turban; below its white folds the silver chain dangled on his bare breast; above it the muzzle of his rifle caught a glint of the western sunlight.

"He says it is not a question of your safety; it is a question of his honor. I was right, Mrs. Lane; he says that he is in blood with the tribes through which one goes to Scutari. If he travels through them by night he will be killed, and in the darkness no one will know who has done it. He does not mind being killed, but to be killed by some one his tribe cannot know and kill afterward would be black dishonor to him. It is true, Mrs. Lane, and he is a great byraktor—the byraktor of five hundred houses."

"But he need not go with me. You and the Shala man will go with me. I only want his mule. Is he afraid for his mule? I will give him a paper, and if I am killed and the mule is stolen he can get another mule from the Red Cross house in Scutari."

I said this quite innocently, but the words taught me what blazing eyes are. One hears of them; one seldom sees them. But the byraktor's eyes seemed actually to kindle into flame, and involuntarily I shrank back when he turned them on me.

"He does not think of the mule, Mrs. Lane. He thinks only of his honor. You must not say such things. He says you cannot go on without him; you are traveling under his protection, and it is his honor that is concerned if anything happens to you."

[Shoshi warchief and [271] author's guide to Scutari analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

577
628 I looked at the ring of utterly savage-looking men, half naked, with shaven heads and scalp-locks, surrounding me in those wild mountains, and suddenly I struggled not to laugh. If a magic vision could have shown me then to my friends at home, how they would have prayed that I escape alive, while the real difficulty was that these savages wanted only too embarrassingly to protect me.

"But, Rexh, it is absurd. I did not ask for his protection; I simply hired his mule. Tell him that he has brought me so far safely, so far I have traveled under his protection. I thank him, I thank him deeply, I am most grateful with my whole heart, but now I will leave his protection and travel onward." And to Rexh's words, with my hand on my heart, I added in Albanian, "I thank you from my heart."

The byraktor made a gesture, only a little gesture with his hand, but the violence of its fury I cannot describe. "You thank me! You have broken my honor!" he said, and even without Rexh's murmured translation I would have felt the menace of the silence that followed.

"But," I said, bewildered, "I am traveling with the Shala man. Isn't the Shala man protection? Besides, tell him I don't need protection. I am protected even here by the power of my own tribe."

"The Shala man shall take you in, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh. That too-handsome youth had hung back from the conversation, but Rexh's stern

[Shala tribe is in blood feud [272] with Shoshi tribe -- Analyst]

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

eye brought him into it. And then there was such a battle of words that the very rocks joined it. The byraktor stood listening, bending down a little, intent; Rexh—short, pudgy Rexh in his flannelette pajamas—drove home with fist on chubby fist his earnest words, and the Shala man called Heaven and the cliffs to witness his clamor. The byraktor turned his eyes from Rexh to the Shala man, from the Shala man to Rexh, and thoughtfully stroked his chin. Around us the other men stood attentive.

Then the Shala man turned and, lifting me from the trail to which I had dismounted, swung me again into the saddle. He pounded the saddle with his fist and exclaimed violently, his face congested with dark blood.

"It is all right, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh, grimly. "He will take you in. He has told the byraktor why he cannot take you to Scutari; it is because the gendarmes are looking for him to kill him. But he will take you in. After that the gendarmes can have him; he is of no use."

Even my fixed idea was shaken by those astounding, calm words.

"But, Rexh," I said, in horror, "I can't kill a man, even to get to Scutari to-night. Do you think the gendarmes will really kill him if he takes me in?" But one glance at the violently miserable Shala man answered the question.

"Yes, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh. "They will kill him by law, because he has killed some men. But, Mrs. Lane, he said he would take you to

PEAKS OF SHALA

577 628 Scutari and he must take you to Scutari. The byraktor will tell you so."

"*Po, po,*" said the byraktor, agreeing, and, "*Po, po,*" said the others; and looking at the Shala man, I had no doubt that if he faltered on the way Rexh's tongue had barbs to drive him onward.

"But explain to the byraktor that it is not American custom—that I can't take a man to be killed, Rexh. I'm sorry," said I, for it did seem a pity to disappoint Rexh so, when he had so nicely arranged everything. I leaned from the saddle and spoke earnestly to the byraktor myself, Rexh's murmured translation for his ears while I held his eyes: "I must get to Scutari to-night. It is necessary. But I do not want to risk any man's life. I take my own life in my hands and go with it on the trail. No one else can carry it for me. That is American custom. It is American custom that I thank you now, and give back to you your protection, and go on alone. If it is not your custom, I am sorry, but by all American custom your honor is safe, and I am American, and Albanian law does not apply to me."

"You speak with a tongue of great learning," said the byraktor, but this time his manner was sympathetic. "However, my honor is my honor, and my protection goes with you all the way to your own tribe. I will go with you to Scutari."

"But I don't want the byraktor to be killed, either!" I wailed; and then the byraktor's

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

gendarme came forward. He was a low-browed, rascally-looking fellow, a man with bad eyes like those of an untrustworthy horse, and a charming smile. He was naked except for the wide scarlet sash around his loins and the tiny white cap over his scalplock.

"The honor of my byraktor is my honor," he said. "My byraktor is a good byraktor and a great byraktor. He is byraktor of five hundred houses. If he is killed, all the valley mourns. If he is killed in the dark and we never know who killed him so that we can kill that man, that is black dishonor for all the tribe of Shoshi. I am only one man, and if I am killed it does not matter. I will go with you to Scutari."

"Glory to your lips!" said the others. "Good! It is decided."

"Well," I thought, "all this is beautiful rhetoric, but no one will kill him while I am with him." As for the danger in the darkness, I did not believe it for a moment. Who would shoot a person he could not see? So I said good-by to the byraktor—all our long and flowery speeches consumed another quarter of an hour, and the sunlight was climbing away over the mountains so rapidly that we could see it go—and I said good-by to all the others, and promised the frantic Shala man that indeed he should be paid what had been promised; I would send him the money by the gendarme, and I would send the mule and the hundred kronen to the byraktor—and then another difficulty arose. If I left the

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

penalties; and finally the conventions which govern the blood-feud. For the blood-feud has occupied from time immemorial, and no doubt still occupies, a very important place in Albanian life, providing the ultimate sanction in all cases in which personal honour is concerned, and on points of personal honour the Albanian is particularly sensitive; and the blood-feud is regulated by a number of very well understood even if unwritten rules and principles.

It is interesting to compare Albanian customary law with that of other headhunters, for the Albanians (see p. 230 below and Miss Durham, *Tribal Origins, etc.*, pp. 172 ff.) till recently at any rate were headhunters. The belief underlying headhunting generally is that life is a material substance residing *par excellence* in the head, and that the abstraction of an enemy's head enables the life-substance in it to be carried off to the head-taker's home to replenish the stock there and increase the fertility of its inhabitants, its crops, and its livestock. Incidentally a surplus of life-substance is necessary to beget children, and hence comes the importance of head-taking as a preliminary to marriage. The tuft left on the head by Albanians (p. 230). as by many Indian tribes and castes, by Chinese, American Indians and others, was probably left originally to shelter life-substance regarded as residing, as in the case of Samson, in the hair. Some Naga tribesmen of Assam give the same account of the purpose of this uncut tuft as do Mrs Hasluck's Albanians, that it is kept to carry away the head by. But this explanation has no doubt arisen from the fact that it is so used in practice. Among the Assam headhunters the vendetta is a communal or a village affair rather than a family one, and there is no taboo on taking the heads of women in pursuance of it, but quite the contrary. In this respect the Albanian practice is more suggestive of that of the Pathans of the North-West Frontier of India. Otherwise the unwritten law of Albania has much similarity with that of south-east Asia and Oceania. The communal destruction of an offender's house at which all members of the community must assist, for instance, is widely distributed from Assam to New Zealand; the banishment of a murderer for life or for a term of years according to the circumstances of the homicide, the association of compurgators with an accused person in the taking of an oath, the assessment of blood-money, are used in the Assam hills much as in the Albanian mountains, and probably in many other primitive areas also. But Albanian customary law is of particular

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

Assemblies of tribe or village watched above all over their honour. Sometimes their interpretation of honour took strange lines. Father Gjeçov gives the following story from the Mirditë tribe of Spaç. The sister of a villager of Gomsiqe was married to a villager of Dush in the same tribe. It happened that on one occasion when she came to pay a visit to her brother she took ill and died. He and his friends laid her on a bier and carried her, not to their own cemetery, but to her husband's house in Dush, presumably to avoid the expense of burying her. When the village heard what they had done, they met in General Assembly, and after carefully appraising the dishonour brought on Gomsiqe by such a public exhibition of meanness, fined the man a cow. This they divided into fifteen portions, which they distributed among the fifteen houses of the village. The fine was justice at its most precise. If the man had buried his sister as he should have done, the funeral feast would have cost him a cow. The event took place about 1903.

Another type of meanness had a similar end. About 1872 a villager of Urë e Shtrejtë in the tribe of Drisht happened to call on a neighbour about midday and was kept for dinner. As they finished, his host scraped his plate. The visitor afterwards complained to the village of the disgrace brought on his own dinner-table by the host. The village met in General Assembly and fined the host 500 grosh for his meanness. According to the law 'a dinner-table is disgraced in a guest's eyes when the host wipes or licks the porringer or scrapes his plate'.

The smallest General Assemblies—those of brotherhoods and households—dealt with what were essentially family matters. They met perhaps to decide on expelling or even killing any hopeless member if his misdeeds were serious enough to threaten the whole brotherhood or household with wholesale punishment by the tribe. They considered the pros and cons of buying an extra bit of land.

Tribal government was entirely democratic—of the people, by the people and for the people, but it differed from tribe to tribe and from time to time, enough to prevent unity. As the tribes in general would not have accepted the law of any one of them as supreme, it was ultimately necessary for Albanian unity that tribal government should be superseded by a modern system evolved in, and exercised from, a capital.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

695 With a few exceptions, the greatest precautions were taken to conceal the witness's identity, as the criminal would have killed him if he had discovered who he was. In Mirditë he was allowed to object to the nomination of men whom he thought too indiscreet to preserve his incognito, and those eventually selected had to take an oath that so long as they lived they would not without his permission divulge his identity. He was always interviewed in all secrecy; often the accuser alone knew who he was. He might be taken to an empty house where the elders awaited him, or led at night to the house of an elder who questioned him from a balcony while he stood unseen by all the inmates, the elder included, in the dark farmyard. In the Malësi e Madhe he was often given a rendezvous by night in another village altogether. In Zerqan he usually met the committee in some lonely spot at sunset, with them on one side of a thick hedge and him on the other so that they could not see him. However often he was interviewed, it was always in the same secrecy.

No doubt owing to the danger involved in trying to bring a criminal to justice, a witness was always given a fee. With the delicacy characteristic of Albanians the fee was cloaked under the name of *këpucë* (lit. 'shoe'), presumably in allusion to the shoe-leather which he wore out in finding or conveying his information. Consequently, *këpucar* means literally the 'man who gets shoe-money'.

In the case of theft the witness's fee was not allowed to exceed the value of the stolen property. It was generally determined by agreement between witness and accuser at their first meeting, often after lively bargaining, particularly if the witness was greedy enough to ask more than he should. When the accuser let it be known that he was looking for a witness, he often specified the fee he was willing to pay. When the theft took place in a house, the fee
• [577] was doubled, because human life had been endangered and the house's honour tarnished; house-breaking always implied that the men in it were weak or the womenfolk light. In Kurbin and Lumë, for example, four napoleons were paid to an informant who found an ox that had been stolen from the farmyard or stable under the house, but only its value, which was always less than four napoleons, in those districts when it had been stolen while grazing outside.

684. A man who disclosed a woman's adultery to her husband
695 received no fee; and a friend was not allowed to take money for

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

*628 596 details; vengeance could not be taken indiscriminately, but was governed by a multiplicity of rules. Thus, a murdered man found his most natural avenger in his brother, especially if they had not separated. If his father was not too old, and his son too young, to bear arms, they shared the brother's obligation. In slightly less degree so did his father's brother and cousin in the male line, and their sons and grandsons, that is to say, all the other males who were in the collective sense his 'father', 'brother' and 'son', through being at the time, or having recently been, members of his household. If his son was in the cradle, the child's mother and the neighbours told him of the crime as he grew up and urged him, failing another avenger, not to rest till he had done his duty. No matter which of these relatives took revenge, his 'rifle could be hung up' and 'go to sleep', to quote the picturesque phrases of Dibër and the North. The lawful representative of his murdered kinsman because he belonged to the same household, he had only made the two sides equal, with one of two results; either peace could be made or the feud continued between the same two families.

A man might kill his enemy where and when he could—in a chance encounter, in a meeting deliberately sought or in a carefully laid ambush. If he was 'strong' with plenty of good shots in his house, he and his family went alone on set expeditions. If he was weak he was probably accompanied by friends, who included friends in the ordinary sense, relatives by marriage, dependants and servants. They came, not for pay, but on his invitation or of their own accord. Invitations, always verbal, requested the recipients to come with so many rifles to such-and-such a place by •[577] such-and-such a day and hour. Those invited were bound to come; those who volunteered were praised by the public for their bravery and devotion, a much coveted distinction. The distance from which they came was immaterial; a feud had no geographical limits.

[572] If the enemy fell to the rifle of a friend, the shot was always credited to the 'master', who was expected to assume responsibility for it. The enemy accepted the kill as a bout in the feud and either made peace or continued the feud with his original antagonist. The friend who fired the fatal shot could 'hang up his rifle' and let it 'go to sleep'; he did not need its protection for he was quit of the affair. If he had been alone when he killed the man, he would have 'brought the feud home', i.e. involved himself in a separate feud with the victim's family while leaving his friend's feud unaffected.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER XXIII

BLOOD FEUD

II. COURSE OF THE FEUD

The fatal shot fired, a murderer's life was in such instant danger from the avenger that it behoved him to fly with all speed. But often his 'blood seized him' so that 'his legs gave way under him' and he was rooted to the spot from shock. Custom therefore prescribed in Shkodër, Lumë and Godolesh that he must drop on the ground a cartridge or an article of clothing such as his fez, sash, or handkerchief; in Elbasan, Shpat and Çermenikë that he must lick the muzzle of his rifle or pistol; alternatively, in Elbasan that he must inhale the smoke of the gunpowder or let his comrades slap his face; in Labinot that he must hold the cartridge case in his mouth and bite his little finger and suck the blood, and in Mat that he must eat a little gunpowder. That done successfully, 'his blood was set free', 'the seizure passed', and he was able to run away.

When an article of clothing was left behind, it served to identify the murderer; where none was left, word had to be sent to the victim's family. It was everywhere 'held dishonourable' to kill and not to tell. It was also thought unfair for reasons that varied with the locality. In Mirditë the victim's relatives might go mad if they did not know the identity of the murderer; in north Albania the murderer's kinsmen would not know to hide while the avenger's blood was boiling; in south Albania the crime might be laid at the wrong door. Besides, the normal murder was matter for boasting; committed only to avenge some wrong or insult, it showed that the murderer was spirited enough to resent ill-treatment.

Latterly, when the government was attempting to repress murder, the murderer, certain of arrest, left no token and did not inform the relatives. The community, however, was always on the watch and from its members' observation of those who came from the direction of the shots and from their knowledge of the whereabouts of the victim's enemies at the time, the murderer's identity was established—at all events to the satisfaction of the community.

In the early days of a feud the father or brother of the victim might in his furious rage kill the murderer and shoot a second time

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania EG1

To the Land of the Eagle

831 Balkans than in more civilised and cultured parts of Europe, and the following true story attests to the lengths to which men are prepared to go in order to maintain the code.

628 A young peasant of Epirus who had only recently taken
● 577 a wife had to go to the war. On leaving he placed her in the
931 care of his brother, charging him by everything he held sacred to guard her honour as if it were his own. On his return, a few years later, he found that the trust had been betrayed—and by the brother himself—and that his wife was about to become a mother. The primitive peasant code demanded the death of both the guilty parties, and the soldier killed his wife with his own hand, but before he could go in pursuit of his brother, who had fled to the mountains, was arrested by the gendarmerie. At the subsequent trial he was sentenced to fifteen year's imprisonment—a sentence which is still unexpired. The man who told me the story said that he paid a visit to the gaol and had an interview with the prisoner, who at first stated that there had been a reconciliation between his brother and himself. The visitor, who knew that this could not possibly be true, said, "Why do you lie to me?" And, as the man remained silent, continued, "I know that you will go back when you are free and kill your brother. And what will be the use of that? It will only mean another long term of imprisonment."

The prisoner nodded. "Yes", he said. "But when my imprisonment is over I shall once more be able to live honourably amongst my own people."

Until, therefore, the disgrace has been wiped out by the

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania-EG1

blood of his brother this man cannot take his rightful position in the family or in the community to which he belongs, and rather than be an outcast and scorned by his people he is prepared to spend a great part of his life in gaol. Such is the Balkan code of honour.

At Koritza I found that the money in circulation was no longer Italian. Here, as at Tirana, one transacted business with the krone (or crown) instead of with the lira, as at Durazzo, Valona, Argyrocastron and in the South generally. The currency, moreover, was entirely metal, and consisted, in addition to the Austrian krone itself, of Turkish silver coins, Greek silver drachmae, Serbian dinars, and so forth—the basis being gold. There are no banks, but there are money-changers who are always quite willing to cash British or American notes, and who have drawers full to the brim with gold—French napoleons, English sovereigns and half-sovereigns, and American five-dollar pieces. I had not seen so much gold at one time since the old days before the war when bank cashiers in English used to gather it up from the counter by the shovelful.

The absence of banks must, one would imagine, be a considerable hindrance to the commercial development of a country. Nevertheless it is remarkable how little difference it seems to make in Albania, and I began to wonder whether banks are, after all, as essential as we are prone to think. It was likely, however, at the time of which I am writing, that an Albanian bank would shortly be established with headquarters at Tirana. A proposal had been made by the

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Montenegrins EF5

of the padres, being Albanian mountain men themselves, thought this right, though they admitted that the beating was sometimes cruelly severe. A 593 681

In some ways the women have more freedom than among the Montenegrins, for they are permitted to give their opinion freely on important subjects, and it is often asked, and they join in general conversation. Nor do their husbands ever apologize for their existence. M A 562

In Montenegro, on the other hand, as often as not the master of the house has shouted: "Be quiet, woman," when his wife only wanted to ask some innocent question. I never heard any of Iké's views except when Krsto was out, and one was always hearing, "Long hair, short wits, a woman's head!" hurled at the women. The Albanian woman, on the other hand, would joke and chaff the men; would even, in the streets of Scutari, call their husbands out of the drink-shop and tell them they had had enough. Nor does the Albanian woman have to bow humbly and kiss the hand of every male visitor as does the Montenegrin peasant woman. Among the Dukagini I found the men would even fetch water—a thing no Montenegrin "junak" would condescend to do.

A curious case illustrating the rights of the husband occurred while I was in Albania. A mountain woman left her husband and came to Scutari, where she lived by prostitution among the Turkish garrison. The husband's honour was blackened, but if he killed his wife he would owe blood to her family. He therefore consulted her brother, her nearest surviving male relative. The brother agreed that his family, too, was blackened, and gave the man the cartridge wherewith to shoot her. Shot she was, and public opinion considered the husband had acted rightly and cleaned the honour of both families. I said that in such a case divorce should be permitted, but was told that so long as she was alive the family honour would still be black; a divorce would be useless. A 577 684

5. Marriage Customs in Montenegro

In Montenegro, and all through the Serb-speaking lands, marriages were arranged by the head of the house. The young people were rarely consulted. A century ago in Montenegro infant and child betrothals were not uncommon, and the young couple did not see each other before marriage. Old Serbian ballads show that exogamy was the rule, for the hero, we are usually told, "sought his bride from afar." Such marriages were designed to strengthen the "house." We find in ballads and tales the youth who laments to his father that no wife has yet been found for him; to whom his father replies: "I have long sought M 583 M [584]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania EG1

The Vendetta.[1]

At that time, the blood feud and the 628
vendetta were the chief preoccupations of the mountain folk 577
and murders and killings were of frequent occurrence. Men were liable to be shot at any moment, and often were shot, solely because their ancestors of several generations back had quarrelled over some trivial matter. Albanians claim to-day that the vendetta is a thing of the past, but I had no difficulty in ascertaining that the claim is not well founded; vendetta crimes are still common, and even while I was in Scutari a murder "in revenge" was reported to the police.

The following story illustrates very well the sacrifices demanded by the code:—

A bitter blood feud had waged for several generations between two families in a remote mountain district. The head of one family died and the headship, and with it the duty of carrying on the vendetta, devolved upon another member of the family who was, as it happened, the village priest. One would have thought that his office would release him from the necessity of committing a murder. But it did not. He bided his time and shot his enemy dead. Then, as there was no other priest within many miles of the place, he officiated—difficult though it is to credit it—at the funeral of his victim.

Notwithstanding that a vendetta murder is committed [681]
in defence of the family honour it is, if the gendarmes succeed in tracing and arresting the perpetrator, invariably punished by hanging. The code of the mountaineers is so strict, however, that the penalty acts as no deterrent. A man who fails in his duty to kill an enemy of his house is outlawed

1 [two years before World 275 War I -- Analyst]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania E61

628 [577] from his own fireside, and he would rather face the gallows than the contempt of his family.

Even apart from the vendetta, the Albanian of this type is sometimes rather too ready to use his gun. Shortly before I was in Scutari a man was killed in a quarrel. It seems that the local schoolmaster had occasion to chastise one of the scholars. The boy's father was angry about it and called on the schoolmaster to remonstrate, taking a friend with him. In the ensuing dispute all lost their tempers and the friend unwisely " butted in." Whereupon the schoolmaster drew a revolver and shot the man dead.

674 681 The act which makes the carrying of firearms illegal is very necessary, and it is a pity that it cannot be enforced in this part of Albania as it has been elsewhere. But the inaccessibility of the mountain villages, and the lawlessness which makes the carrying of a weapon almost obligatory for self-protection, are at the moment insuperable difficulties. All that the gendarmes have been able to do so far is to insist that rifles shall be deposited at the police post outside Scutari before their owners enter the town. This explains what at first puzzled me—why the men in the streets of Scutari and in the Scutari bazaar were decorated with belts full of cartridges and yet no guns or rifles were in evidence.